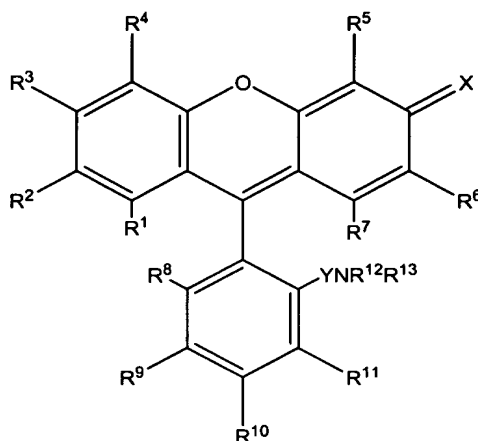


WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A xanthene dye having the formula:



in which

R¹, R², R⁴, R⁵, R⁶, R⁷, R⁸, R⁹, R¹⁰ and R¹¹ are independently selected from substituted or unsubstituted alkyl, substituted or unsubstituted heteroalkyl, substituted or unsubstituted aryl, substituted or unsubstituted heteroaryl, substituted or unsubstituted heterocycloalkyl, halogen, H, NO₂, CN and C(Z¹)R¹⁴, NR¹⁵R¹⁶ and Z²R¹⁶;

R³ is selected from Z²R¹⁶ and NR¹⁵R¹⁶

wherein

Z¹ is a member selected from O, S and NH;

Z² is a member selected from O and S;

R¹⁵ is a member selected from H, substituted or unsubstituted alkyl, and substituted or unsubstituted heteroalkyl;

R¹⁶ is selected from H, substituted or unsubstituted alkyl, substituted or unsubstituted heteroalkyl, C(Z³)R¹⁷, and a nitrogen-containing reactive group comprising R¹⁵ and R¹⁶, together with the nitrogen to which they are attached, wherein said reactive group is a member selected from -NHNH₂, -N=C=S and -N=C=O

wherein

Z³ is a member selected from O, S and NH;

R¹⁷ is a member selected from substituted or unsubstituted alkyl, substituted or unsubstituted heteroalkyl, OR¹⁸, and NR¹⁹R²⁰

wherein

R^{18} is a member selected from H, substituted or unsubstituted
 alkyl, substituted or unsubstituted heteroalkyl,
 substituted or unsubstituted aryl, substituted or
 unsubstituted heteroaryl and $C(O)R^{21}$
 wherein
 R^{21} is substituted or unsubstituted alkyl or substituted or
 unsubstituted heteroalkyl;
 R^{19} and R^{20} are members independently selected from H,
 substituted or unsubstituted alkyl and substituted or
 unsubstituted heteroalkyl
 Y is a member selected from $C(O)$ and $S(O)_2$;
 X is a member selected from $(NR^{22}R^{23})$ and (O)
 wherein
 R^{22} and R^{23} are members independently selected from H, substituted or
 unsubstituted alkyl and substituted or unsubstituted heteroalkyl; and
 R^{12} and R^{13} are members independently selected from substituted or unsubstituted
 alkyl, substituted or unsubstituted heteroalkyl, substituted or unsubstituted
 heterocycloalkyl, substituted or unsubstituted aryl and substituted or
 unsubstituted heteroaryl, with the proviso that at least one of R^{12} or R^{13}
 comprises a member selected from a bond to a carrier molecule, a bond to a
 linker bound to a carrier molecule, a bond to a solid support, a bond to a linker
 attached to a solid support, a bond to a fluorescence quencher, a bond to a
 linker to a fluorescence quencher and an oxygen-containing reactive group,
 and further with the proviso that when R^{12} and R^{13} , together with the nitrogen
 to which they are attached form a piperazine ring said oxygen-containing
 reactive group is a phosphoramidite and said bond to a carrier molecule is
 other than a bond to a peptide.

2. The xanthene dye according to claim 1, wherein R^3 is $R^{15}R^{16}N$; and X
 is $NR^{23}R^{24}$, wherein R^{15} , R^{16} , R^{23} and R^{24} are members independently selected from H,
 substituted or unsubstituted alkyl and substituted or unsubstituted heteroalkyl.

3. The xanthene dye according to claim 1, wherein at least one of R^8 , R^9 ,
 R^{10} and R^{11} is a halogen.

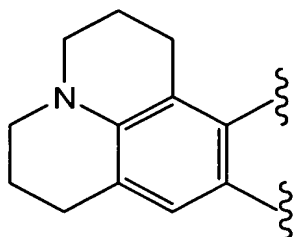
1 4. The xanthene dye according to claim 1, wherein R⁹ and R¹⁰ are
2 halogen.

1 5. The xanthene dye according to claim 3, wherein R³ is OR¹⁶; and X is
2 O.

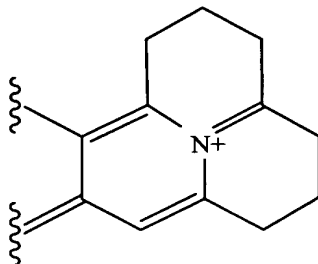
1 6. The xanthene dye according to claim 5, wherein R² and R⁶ are halogen.

1 7. The xanthene dye according to claim 5, wherein R² and R⁶ are
2 independently selected from substituted or unsubstituted alkyl and substituted or
3 unsubstituted heteroalkyl.

1 8. The xanthene dye according to claim 1, wherein R³ is NR¹⁵R¹⁶ and R²,
2 R⁴ and R¹⁵ and R¹⁶, together with the nitrogen atom to which they are bound, are fused with
3 the phenyl moiety to which NR¹⁵R¹⁶, R² and R⁴ are bound, forming a substituted or
4 unsubstituted ring system having formula:



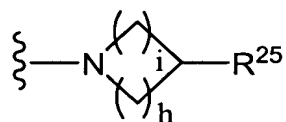
1 9. The xanthene dye according to claim 1, wherein X is NR²²R²³ and R⁵,
2 R⁶ and R²² and R²³, together with the nitrogen atom to which they are bound, are fused with
3 the unsaturated 6-member ring to which NR²²R²³, R⁵ and R⁶ are bound, forming a substituted
4 or unsubstituted ring system having the formula:



10. The xanthene dye according to claim 1, wherein said oxygen-containing reactive functional group is a member selected from hydroxyl and activated derivatives thereof, phosphoramidite, and carboxylic acid and activated derivatives thereof.

11. The xanthene dye according to claim 1, wherein R^{12} and R^{13} , together with the nitrogen to which they are bound are joined to form a ring system.

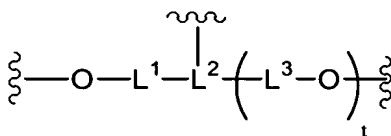
12. The xanthene dye according to claim 11, wherein $NR^{12}R^{13}$ has the formula:



wherein

h and i are members independently selected from integers such that the sum ($h + i$) is from 4-8; and R^{25} is a reactive functional group.

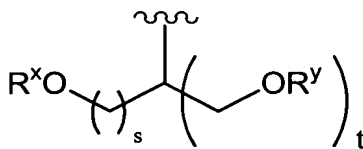
13. The xanthene dye according to claim 1, wherein R^{12} comprises a moiety having the formula:



wherein

L^1 , L^2 and L^3 are members independently selected from substituted or unsubstituted alkyl and substituted or unsubstituted heteroalkyl; and t is 0 or 1.

14. The xanthene dye according to claim 13, said moiety having the formula:



wherein

R^x and R^y are members independently selected from H, substituted or unsubstituted alkyl, substituted or unsubstituted heteroalkyl, a hydroxyl-protecting group, a phosphate moiety, a phosphodiester moiety, a phosphorus-containing internucleotide bridge of a nucleic acid, a solid support, a carrier molecule and —OP(O)(OR^o)(N(R^pR^q))₂

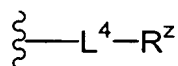
wherein

R^o, R^p and R^q are members independently selected from H, substituted or unsubstituted C₁-C₆ alkyl and substituted or unsubstituted C₁-C₆ heteroalkyl; and

s is an integer from 1 to 20.

15. The xanthene dye according to claim 14, wherein R^o is CH₂CH₂CN.

16. The xanthene dye according to claim 14, wherein at least one of R^x and R^y comprises a moiety having the formula:

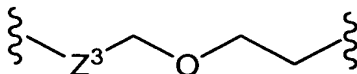


wherein

L⁴ is a member selected from a bond, substituted or unsubstituted alkyl and substituted or unsubstituted heteroalkyl; and

R^z is a member selected from a reactive functional group, solid support, a nucleic acid, a saccharide and a peptide.

17. The xanthene dye according to claim 16, wherein L⁴ comprises a moiety having the formula:



wherein Z³ is a member selected from CH₂ and C=O.

18. The xanthene dye according to claim 1, wherein said carrier molecule further comprises a quencher moiety.

19. The xanthene dye according to claim 18, wherein said xanthene dye and said quencher comprise a donor-acceptor energy transfer pair.

1 20. The xanthene dye according to claim 18, wherein said quencher has
2 substantially no native fluorescence.

1 21. The xanthene dye according to claim 20, wherein said quencher
2 comprises at least three residues selected from aryl, substituted aryl, heteroaryl, substituted
3 heteroaryl and combinations thereof, wherein at least two of said residues are covalently
4 linked via an exocyclic diazo bond.

1 22. The xanthene dye according to claim 1, wherein said xanthene dye is
2 attached to a nucleic acid at a position which is a member selected from the 3'-terminus, the
3 5'-terminus, a nucleobase, and a phosphorus-containing internucleotide bridge of said nucleic
4 acid.

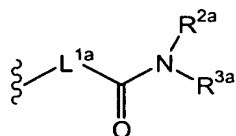
1 23. The xanthene dye according to claim 18, wherein said nucleic acid is a
2 probe which is a member selected from molecular beacons, scorpion probes, sunrise probes,
3 conformationally assisted probes and TaqMan™ probes.

1 24. The xanthene dye according to claim 1, wherein said carrier molecule
2 is a peptide comprising a cleavage recognition site for an enzyme.

1 25. The xanthene dye according to claim 24, wherein said peptide
2 comprises a cleavage recognition site for a protease.

1 26. The xanthene dye according to claim 24, wherein said cleavage
2 recognition site is for an enzyme selected from trypsin, enterokinase, HIV-1 protease,
3 prohormone convertase, interleukin-1 β -converting enzyme, adenovirus endopeptidase,
4 cytomegalovirus assemblin, leishmanolysin, β -secretase for amyloid precursor protein,
5 thrombin, renin, angiotensin-converting enzyme, cathepsin-D and a kininogenase.

1 27. The xanthene dye according to claim 1, in which R¹² has the formula:



3 wherein

4 L^{1a} is a member selected from substituted or unsubstituted alkyl, and
5 substituted or unsubstituted heteroalkyl groups; and

R^{2a} and R^{3a} are members independently selected from H, substituted or unsubstituted alkyl, and substituted or unsubstituted heteroalkyl, and R² and R³, together with the nitrogen to which they are attached, are optionally joined to form a ring which is a member selected from substituted or unsubstituted C₅-C₇ cycloalkyl and substituted or unsubstituted 5-7-membered heterocycloalkyl.

28. The xanthene dye according to claim 27, in which L^{1a} does not comprise a member selected from a carboxylic acid and a carboxylic acid ester.

29. A method for determining whether a sample contains an enzyme, said method comprising:

(a) contacting said sample with a peptide construct comprising

i) a xanthene dye according to claim 1;

ii) a quencher; and

iii) a cleavage recognition site for said enzyme,

wherein said peptide is in a conformation allowing donor-acceptor energy transfer between said fluorophore and said quencher when said fluorophore is excited;

(b) exciting said xanthene dye; and

(c) determining a fluorescence property of said sample, wherein the presence of said enzyme in said sample results in a change in said fluorescence property.

30. A method for determining whether a compound alters an activity of an enzyme, said method comprising:

(a) contacting a sample comprising said enzyme and said compound with a peptide construct comprising

i) a xanthene dye according to claim 1;

ii) a quencher; and

iii) a cleavage recognition site for said enzyme,

wherein said peptide is in a conformation allowing donor-acceptor energy transfer between said xanthene dye and said quencher when said xanthene dye is excited;

(b) exciting said xanthene dye; and

12 (c) determining a fluorescence property of said sample, wherein said activity of said
13 enzyme in said sample results in a change in said fluorescence property.

1 31. A method for detecting a nucleic acid target sequence, said method
2 comprising:

3 (a) contacting said target sequence with a detector oligonucleotide comprising a
4 target binding sequence, said detector oligonucleotide having linked thereto,

5 i) a xanthene dye according to claim 1; and

6 ii) a quencher,

7 wherein said detector nucleic acid is in a conformation allowing donor-

8 acceptor energy transfer between said xanthene dye and said quencher

9 when said xanthene dye is excited;

10 (b) hybridizing said target binding sequence to said single-stranded target sequence,
11 thereby altering said conformation of said detector oligonucleotide, causing a
12 change in a fluorescence parameter; and

13 (c) detecting said change in said fluorescence parameter, thereby detecting said
14 nucleic acid target sequence.

1 32. The method according to claim 31, wherein said complementary strand
2 is synthesized in a target amplification reaction.

1 33. The method according to claim 31, wherein said complementary strand
2 is synthesized by extension of the target sequence using said detector oligonucleotide as a
3 template.

1 34. The method according to claim 31, wherein said fluorescence
2 parameter is detected in –real-time.

1 35. A method for detecting amplification of a target sequence comprising,
2 in an amplification reaction:

3 (a) hybridizing to said target sequence a detector oligonucleotide comprising a single-
4 stranded target binding sequence and an intramolecularly associated secondary
5 structure 5' to said target binding sequence, wherein at least a portion of said
6 detector sequence is a single stranded tail which is available for hybridization to
7 said target sequence, said detector oligonucleotide having linked thereto,

8 i) a xanthene dye according to claim 1; and

9 ii) a quencher,
10 wherein said detector nucleic acid is in a conformation allowing donor-
11 acceptor energy transfer between said xanthene dye and said quencher
12 when said xanthene dye is excited;
13 (b) extending said hybridized detector oligonucleotide on said target sequence with a
14 polymerase to produce a detector oligonucleotide extension product and
15 separating said detector oligonucleotide extension product from said target
16 sequence;
17 (c) hybridizing a primer to said detector oligonucleotide extension product and
18 extending the primer with said polymerase, thereby linearizing said
19 intramolecularly associated secondary structure and producing a change in a
20 fluorescence parameter; and
21 (d) detecting said change in said fluorescence parameter, thereby detecting said target
22 sequence.

1 **36.** The method according to claim **35**, wherein said target sequence is
2 amplified by a method selected from Strand Displacement Amplification, Polymerase Chain
3 reaction, Self Sustained Sequence Replication, Transcription Mediated Amplification, and
4 Nucleic Acid Sequence Based Amplification.

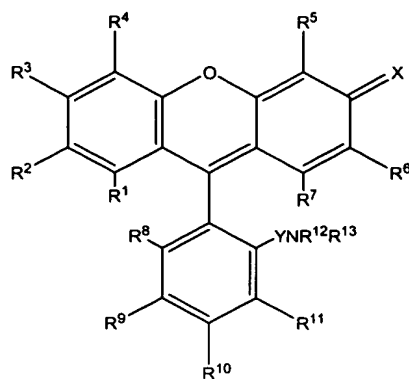
1 **37.** The method according to claim **35**, wherein said secondary structure
2 further comprises a partially or entirely single-stranded restriction endonuclease site.

1 **38.** The method according to claim **35**, wherein a change in fluorescence
2 intensity is detected.

1 **39.** The method according to claim **38**, wherein said change in
2 fluorescence intensity is detected in real-time.

1 **40.** The method according to claim **35**, wherein said intramolecularly
2 associated secondary structure comprises a portion of said target binding sequence.

1 **41.** A method of preparing a conjugate between a nucleic acid and a
2 xanthene dye having the formula:



in which

$R^1, R^2, R^4, R^5, R^6, R^7, R^8, R^9, R^{10}$ and R^{11} are independently selected from substituted or unsubstituted alkyl, substituted or unsubstituted heteroalkyl, substituted or unsubstituted aryl, substituted or unsubstituted heteroaryl, substituted or unsubstituted heterocycloalkyl, halogen, H, NO_2 , CN and $\text{C}(Z^1)R^{14}$, $\text{NR}^{15}R^{16}$ and Z^2R^{16} ;

R^3 is selected from Z^2R^{16} and $\text{NR}^{15}R^{16}$

wherein

Z^1 is a member selected from O, S and NH;

Z^2 is a member selected from O and S;

R^{15} is a member selected from H, substituted or unsubstituted alkyl, and substituted or unsubstituted heteroalkyl;

R^{16} is selected from H, substituted or unsubstituted alkyl, substituted or unsubstituted heteroalkyl, $\text{C}(Z^3)R^{17}$, and a nitrogen-containing reactive group comprising R^{15} and R^{16} , together with the nitrogen to which they are attached, wherein said reactive group is a member selected from $-\text{NHNH}_2$, $-\text{N}=\text{C}=\text{S}$ and $-\text{N}=\text{C}=\text{O}$

wherein

Z^3 is a member selected from O, S and NH;

R^{17} is a member selected from substituted or unsubstituted alkyl, substituted or unsubstituted heteroalkyl, OR^{18} , and $\text{NR}^{19}R^{20}$

wherein

R^{18} is a member selected from H, substituted or unsubstituted alkyl, substituted or unsubstituted heteroalkyl, substituted or unsubstituted aryl, substituted or unsubstituted heteroaryl and $\text{C}(\text{O})R^{21}$

